

East Hollywood High School 2185 South 3600 West West Valley City, Utah 84119

March 7, 2008





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

East Hollywood High School 2185 South 3600 West West Valley City, UT 84119

March 7, 2008

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 7, 2008, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of East Hollywood High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Jason Stanger is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at East Hollywood High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at East Hollywood High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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7/25/2007

EAST HOLLYWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

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EAST HOLLYWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of East Hollywood High School is to provide authentic, career preparatory training to students with a passion for careers in film production, digital media production, and acting; to provide solid liberal arts education to students in preparation for college entry; and to assist in the character education and development of each student.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

East Hollywood High School believes students will act with integrity in expressing themselves and meeting their ethical and legal obligations.

East Hollywood High School believes in maintaining a strong, supportive, community atmosphere amongst and between students and faculty.

East Hollywood High School students will expect excellence of themselves in activities that are core to their mission while maintaining adequate performance in non-core, but necessary activities.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

Thinking and Reasoning (College Preparation):

Acquires, organizes, and evaluates information to make informed decisions.

Integrates new learning with existing knowledge and experiences.

Uses inquiry and technological skills to research, expand, apply, and connect knowledge.

Applies multiple strategies to solve a variety of problems.

Generates new and creative ideas in a variety of contexts.

Personal Growth and Character Development:

Identifies personal goals, organizes and maintains information, monitors progress, and engages in self-assessment.

Demonstrates quality.

Demonstrates leadership attributes.

Exhibits empathy and self-discipline.

Exhibits self-control and leadership.

Demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness.

Employability (Film Production):

Possesses flexibility, adaptability, and the capacity to cope with change.

Demonstrates self-motivation, dependability, and initiative.

Exhibits analytical and decision making abilities.
Uses effective communication and interpersonal skills.
Participates as an effective team member.
Demonstrates organization, planning, and prioritization abilities.
Recognizes the impact of technology on business and industry.
Exhibits leadership abilities.

Date of Visit: March 7, 2008

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ted P. Lovato, Accreditation Consultant, Northwest Association of Accredited Schools and Utah State Office of Education, Chairperson

Jeannie Rowland, Specialist, Charter Schools Office, Utah State Office of Education, Salt Lake City

Jessie Kidd, Principal, DaVinci Academy, Ogden

VISITING TEAM REPORT

EAST HOLLYWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

East Hollywood High School is a Utah public charter school located in West Valley City, Utah. East Hollywood High School provides both traditional core and film production curriculum to 314 students in grades 9-12. East Hollywood High maintains its student body size below 350 and its average class size below 25. For many students who may feel lost in a larger school setting, this allows students more individual access to teachers and staff and helps them to feel that they are an important part of the learning community at East Hollywood High School.

A set of courses are offered beyond graduation requirements that are recommended for college entry. East Hollywood also offers several concurrent enrollment courses, which allow the students to earn college credit while still in high school.

East Hollywood High offers a unique and powerful learning experience for students who are passionate about learning film production and related arts/media while they also prepare for college. Such an experience is created by the confluence of experience with the Core Curriculum, apprenticeship learning, smaller class and student body sizes, and opportunities for students to extend their education into the film production industry.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

One of the most significant findings during the process of East Hollywood High School's self-study process was the staff's ability to come together and have critical, sometimes difficult, conversations regarding the students and progress of the school. Each department's analysis encouraged dialogue with faculty members, bringing to light the strengths and areas needing improvement.

East Hollywood High School performed a critical study of students' performance in statewide assessments and graduation using longitudinal data from the school's three years in operation. In comparing CRT results to those of surrounding districts, East Hollywood High School found that (1) language arts scores are on par with or exceed those of other high schools; (2) although there has been consistent progress in mathematics, normative comparisons show East Hollywood High School student math skills to be below those of the county and state, especially in geometry; and (3) East Hollywood High School students have not yet meet the U-PASS proficiency standard, but are close to the progress standard. These scores are typical in comparison with surrounding districts. Plans are being made to support revealing trends while scrutinizing the data.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

It is necessary to have a person in charge of the accreditation process. The principal has proficiently performed that task. However, having one dedicated, strong leader is in charge has a tendency to allow others to take a passive role in its completion and feel less ownership. The principal is a well-organized, driven leader. This permits him to consistently compensate for a lack of support in the many tasks to compile the self-study. The Visiting Team would recommend delegating the task of creating various components of the written self-study. This is critical for teacher buy-in, and often creates understanding of the responsibilities, problems, questions, solutions, and successful aspects affecting the school community.

c) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

Through the self-study process, East Hollywood High School is aware of its strengths and limitations. However, the analysis is limited and at surface level. Conversations during the site visit revealed the school's desire to improve student behavior, but this was not explored in the self-study.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- As discussed with the administrative team, the Visiting Team feels longitudinal
 data regarding post high school activities will be enlightening as to how many
 continued on to college or pursued a career in film production and related
 arts/media.
- The Visiting Team believes that further study should be conducted of why parents are or are not involved in the success of their students and the school.
- A more in-depth look should be taken at the East Hollywood High School staff's knowledge of pedagogy in relation to instruction, monitoring, and interventions for low-performing students, as well as the staff's intention to increase the knowledge of teachers and contributing artists.
- Another area needing inquiry is the necessity and possible implementation of a school-wide professional development plan to ensure the staff is gaining the needed knowledge and students are receiving high quality instruction based on the latest research—all with a focused, aligned purpose.

CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs):

a) To what degree were the school's mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs developed and/or revised collaboratively by the school community to define a compelling purpose and vision for the school and to support student achievement?

East Hollywood High School's self-study documents states that a consensusbuilding process that involved founders, administrators, faculty, support staff, parents, and students to develop its current vision statement, mission statement, and values was used.

Throughout the self-study process, the mission has been reviewed and updated several times since its initial iteration. Feedback was sought from all stakeholder groups. It is apparent to the Visiting Team that administrators played a much larger formal role than other stakeholders in creating the initial drafts of the vision, mission, and values. An area of improvement would be to create a more formal review of vision, mission, and values by groups that include all stakeholders.

b) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's DRSLs?

The East Hollywood High School vision and mission statements clearly define a compelling purpose and direction for the school and focus on student learning in the areas of (1) college preparation, (2) film production, and (3) character development. The East Hollywood High School leaders, in their self-study document, write that "The vision and mission statements are in place and provide strong direction for the school." There is a further belief that goals for improvement in student learning and instructional and organizational effectiveness are being met and improving the quality of the overall educational program.

The Visiting Team agrees with staff members that a greater focus is needed on how to implement the mission at the departmental level. Greater and more frequent communication about the vision, mission, and values is needed, with an emphasis on steering all faculty and students to embodying the values.

c) Describe the indicators (measures) that have been developed to assess the school's progress in assessing the DRSLs.

While current East Hollywood High School goals are generally solidly defined, and have had a positive impact on student performance and instructional/organizational effectiveness, future performance goals should measure a broader spectrum of performance through a wider variety of

measurements, which need not be completed only by standardized testing. The self-study indicates a need for the creation of more goals, such as the creation of portfolios as a type of evaluative tool in measuring student achievement.

d) To what extent do the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs guide the procedures, policies and decisions of the school, and appear evident in the culture of the school?

The East Hollywood High School staff write that "East Hollywood High School belief statements (and mission) are clear and balance each other and were created to address key issues in both day-to-day interactions and strategic decision making and policy formulation—especially in areas where there had previously been some ambiguity or inconsistency in adhering to principles that strengthened the East Hollywood High School community." The school must do a better job of reaching all students (and some staff members) with their marketing efforts to bolster overall knowledge of DRSLs, mission, and beliefs.

Curriculum:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards, the Utah Core Curriculum, reflecting the Utah Life Skills: A Guide to Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for Success?

East Hollywood High School self-study states, "All teaching departments report using the Utah State Core Curriculum as the basis for their curriculum. However, some film and related arts and media courses have difficulty as the state core curriculums for their subjects are sometimes thin." The Visiting Team found that the school staff needs to extend more effort in this critical area. The school is currently lacking a fully developed curriculum implementation plan. Staff members admit that there is inconsistent alignment between instructional strategies, use of resources, and valid and reliable assessment practices. In addition, there is limited coordination, collaboration, and articulation at East Hollywood High School.

The Visiting Team found that there is evidence of limited support for the use of best practices and the use of research-based instructional strategy. In addition, there is an overall lack of knowledge of *Utah Life Skills: A Guide to Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for Success.*

b) To what extent does the curriculum engage **all** students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills?

East Hollywood High School has a wide diversity in student population as it relates to academic ability. For the highly motivated students, East Hollywood High School has progressively added more challenging courses to the curriculum. This includes the addition of Intermediate Algebra, Pre-calculus, senior language arts, and eight concurrent enrollment courses and more advanced film courses. Many students were observed engaged in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-

order thinking skills. However, students interviewed reported wanting a more rigorous essential learning experience.

It was evident that some struggling students are more likely to fall through the cracks at East Hollywood High School, but those who exhibit self-motivation do receive excellent support from a faculty who genuinely care for students.

c) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's DRSLs?

The Visiting Team found this to be a major weakness of the school. The self-study document states, "There is limited curriculum coordination and articulation at East Hollywood High School." Areas of the curriculum have not had formal, assessment-based articulation reviews. Some teachers report that there have been instances of teachers coordinating projects with other teachers on an ad hoc basis.

d) How does the staff use assessments to drive curriculum to ensure that **all** students can reach the intended learning outcomes?

The school does very little in the area of a scope and sequence for the curriculum. Without a scope and sequence to the curriculum, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of the current program. It is evident that not all teachers at East Hollywood High School share the same level of expectation for students. Similar rubrics are not used for similar assignments, and it was evident to the Visiting Team that much more collaboration is needed in these key areas.

Instruction:

a) To what extent do teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to enhance student learning?

Teachers embed numerous cross-curricular opportunities for students, including the Special Education Department. Group projects and collaboration among students is encouraged.

b) To what extent have the school and the staff developed strategies for instruction that build the capacity for explicitly teaching the identified DRSL in every classroom?

The instructional focus on the identified DRSLs was clearly stated. Even though a few staff members admitted not knowing the beliefs, there is no question about whether each faculty member knows and understands the school's DRSLs.

c) To what extent is the school's professional development program guided by identified instructional needs, and how does it provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies that support student learning?

On the whole, professional development attendance is an autonomous process; there is not a specific school-wide program. Faculty members, usually as a department, attend professional development opportunities they see as needed or useful. Many departments, such as performing arts or film productivity, currently study in the field they teach. Administrators also notify the staff of professional development opportunities via e-mail.

d) To what extent are teachers proficient in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective on their own practices?

On the whole, professional development attendance is an autonomous process; there is not a specific, school-wide program. Faculty members, usually as a department, attend professional development opportunities they see as needed or useful. Many departments, such as performing arts or film productivity, currently study in the field they teach. Administration also notifies staff of professional development opportunities via e-mail.

e) To what extent does the school effectively implement a well-defined plan for the integration of technology into its curriculum, instruction, and assessments?

Technology is woven into every aspect of curriculum, instruction, and assessment at East Hollywood High School. With a specific focus on film and media, the school has procured state-of-the-art equipment and continues to look for creative ways to fund additional purchases.

Assessment:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments with performance standards based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

The Visiting Team found that the school staff needs to collaborate more often in the area of student assessment. In talking with students (and teachers), the Visiting Team found that not all teachers share the same level of expectation for students. Similar rubrics are not used for similar assignments. Students expressed frustration because of this. Even though some teachers use disclosure statements to articulate how grading is done and some use blogs and web pages to communicate with students (and parents), it is still evident that there is inconsistency within the overall assessment philosophy at the school.

b) To what extent does the school have a process to fairly and equitably assess school-wide and individual progress in achieving academic expectations?

According to the East Hollywood High School self-study document, a student survey found that the vast majority of students either "agree" or "strongly agree" with the idea that assessments and assignments are clearly defined in their

classrooms. However, students interviewed still feel that there should be a stronger consistency in grading practices by the entire faculty. This lack of consistency makes it most difficult for struggling students.

c) To what extent does the professional staff use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its academic expectations?

According to the self-study document, most assessments have content validity with the Core Curriculum and, students "generally feel that teachers use assessment data to improve instruction." In addition, the document states that "some assessments are used to denote effort or timeliness rather than competency. The developmental use of assessment is inconsistently used and makes it difficult to 'catch' the struggling students before they receive failing marks at the end of the term."

d) To what extent does the school's professional development program allow for opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies?

The Visiting Team believes that East Hollywood High School could do more in the critical area of staff development, which would hopefully include the review of assessment strategies.

e) To what extent is there organizational agreement on the use of a school-wide scoring tool to assess the identified DRSL?

According to the self-study document, the staff reviewed the profile, mission/values, DRSLs, departmental reports, and focus group reports. As a result, they established action plans for improvement. Many areas for improvement were identified, but little is evident to show the use of a school-wide scoring tool to assess the identified DRSLs.

CHAPTER 3: NAAS SUPPORT STANDARDS

Leadership and Organization:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate that actively supports teaching and learning?

The learning climate at East Hollywood High School fosters an academic climate rich in creativity and inquiry-driven instruction. Students are excited about their one-of-a-kind school and the academic successes they achieve there. The principal has an infectious desire to achieve, and works well with most teachers to develop instructional best practices for their school environment.

Parents interviewed were very pleased with the leadership, and expressed

appreciation for their individual child's success—which was not being found at past schools attended—at East Hollywood High School.

b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative to monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness?

The East Hollywood High School administration employed Utah State University's Indicators for School Quality (ISQ) process. The research and data will begin to develop the dialogue needed among all stakeholders to build a collaborative school improvement process. The self-study lacked a clear and concise explanation of the leadership decision-making beyond the ISQ data.

c) To what extent does the leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and allocation and use of resources at the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment which aligns with the school goals, DRSLs, and school improvement?

Some limited efforts have been made to involve students and faculty in the decision-making processes. The Visiting Team recommends that the leadership team look toward developing a scaffolded system of delegation to ensure a culture of trust and stewardship among the school's teaching staff and personnel. At times it seemed to the Visiting Team that the principal carries too much of the leadership burden. He is successful in many ways—the school seems safe and efficient in most ways, and there is effective learning taking place.

d) To what extent does the school leadership empower the entire school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning through meaningful roles in the decision-making process?

The Visiting Team found East Hollywood High School's principal to be dedicated and very hardworking, but felt that there is a need for a scaffolded system of delegation. The self-study document recommended areas of improvement, which included:

- a) Need a scope and sequence for the entire curriculum that includes student "deliverables" that can be solid measures of student progress.
- b) Create robust teacher evaluation mentorship/training program aimed at improving student learning (must free up administrative time to do so).
- c) Improve strategic decision making by:
 - 1. Requiring the use of appropriate financial, market, competitive, and operational analysis.
 - 2. Enlarging the school board to include connected professionals (especially education/film pros).
 - 3. Reviewing major strategic decisions with stakeholders (parents, students, and faculty) before implementing them.
- d) Increase communication/collaboration about improvement goals/plans.
 - 1. Initiate a parent feedback forum.
 - 2. Communicate progress and changes to stakeholders in a timely manner.

e) To what extent has the school established a formal system through which each student has an adult staff member who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning?

The Visiting Team did not observe a formal system through which each student has an adult staff member as a teacher-advisor of sorts, but this does not mean that students feel ignored or isolated at East Hollywood High School. The many students interviewed expressed genuine respect and appreciation for the adults at the school. The students expressed that East Hollywood High School teachers "go above and beyond" in attending to students' needs and, because of that, students feel successful at East Hollywood High School.

School Services:

This standard is dealt with in the school's NAAS Annual Report, which requires specific responses and information regarding student support services, guidance services, health services, library information services, special education services, and family and community services.

Facilities and Finances:

This standard is addressed in the school's annual report to NAAS, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

CHAPTER 4: NAAS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

<u>Culture of Continual Improvement:</u>

- a) To what extent has the school developed and implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan using Collaborating for Student Achievement, the Utah accreditation/school improvement process, that is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis?
 - The current year's improvement plan is approximately 30 percent complete, with the remaining components at "Partially Completed" or "Initiated" status.
- b) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through an aligned and ongoing professional development plan focused on the school's goals for improvement?
 - There is no aligned and ongoing professional development plan. Departments meet their specific content area needs.

c) To what extent is the new/revised school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up and is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?

The action plan addresses the areas of critical need, such as discipline; communication with parents; and developing stronger partnerships with industry, philanthropies, and higher education. Markedly missing, however, is the needed support of teacher growth and development, including time for the administration to observe, evaluate, and reflect with the faculty.

d) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The administration has high expectations for productive change and continuous improvement. It is clear that the administration is willing to support the staff in its needs and growth. However, with the principal carrying the majority of the load of responsibility, the staff has not yet taken ownership of school-wide change and continuous improvement.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

East Hollywood High School's faculty, students, and parents reported generally positive and productive working relationships in its community. Students responded quite positively to the notion of the absence of student cliques at the school. Teachers commented that, on the whole, they are satisfied with students and their performance, but feel attention needs to be placed on improving student respect toward the teaching staff.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The School Improvement Plan shows a limited understanding of school-wide team collaboration. It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that the school administration implement efforts to develop enduring partnerships between the school and all community members in reaching its overarching school sustainability.

c) To what extent has the school engaged the school community in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

Teachers are available to assist students before and after school, and often during preparation and lunch periods. The first-name basis relationship most students develop with their teachers and school staff promotes the professional, real-world

feel the mission of the school seeks to cultivate. Some parents reported that teachers are reticent regarding extra help for the struggling (sometimes unmotivated) student. The Visiting Team recommends that the teaching faculty of East Hollywood High address the ever-difficult issue of serving the struggling and underserved.

d) How are results of school improvement identified, documented, used, and communicated to **all** stakeholders?

The East Hollywood High School improvement plan lacks a clear plan to discuss and implement school improvement through all stakeholders in the East Hollywood High School community. The Visiting Team recommends that the school look at avenues to pursue school collaboration and buy-in of the school improvement process.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends East Hollywood High School for its caring, nurturing, innovative, and enthusiastic faculty and staff, and for their commitment to build strong relationships with the students.
- The Visiting Team commends the East Hollywood High School principal for providing open and honest communication with teachers, parents, and students, and for possessing a strong work ethic on behalf of the total school.
- The Visiting Team commends those parents involved for their willingness to support the mission, and beliefs of the students and faculty.
- The Visiting Team commends East Hollywood High School for the school's refinement of the mission to institute a more rigorous academic purpose, and for establishing the momentum for motivating most of the students.
- The Visiting Team commends East Hollywood High School for its increased test scores, graduation rate, and participation in valid and viable film festivals in order to stimulate student interest.

Recommendations:

• The Visiting Team recommends that East Hollywood High School develop an organizational model that provides more leadership opportunities for teachers and staff in order to lend more support to the current school administration.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the Board of Trustees develop a financial plan in order to ensure security, viability, and long-range stability for the East Hollywood High School community.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school seek innovative ways of increasing opportunities for staff professional development and planning for assessing needs, establishing budgets, and creating timelines to support professional growth, peer mentoring, and self-reflection. Teachers need to be more collaborative in the area of valid, school-wide assessment practices.
- The Visiting Team recommends using a collective study of **best practices and research** in assessing the school's DRSLs, and appropriate analysis for strategic decision-making, especially in curriculum coordination and articulation.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the East Hollywood High School administration and guidance staff work together in strengthening career and college exploration for students and becoming a comprehensive guidance school.